

CLASSIFICATION OFFICE DECISION

Title of publication: Is Allah like you?

Other known title(s): Not stated

OFLC ref: 1900285.000

Medium: Booklet

Publisher: Not stated

Country of origin: United States

Language: English

Applicant: Commissioner of Police

Classification:	Unrestricted.
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Descriptive note: None

Display conditions: None

Date of entry in Register: 26 July 2019

Date of direction to issue a label: No direction to issue a label has been issued

Date of notice of decision: 25 July 2019

Summary of reasons for decision:

The publication is a small 23 page booklet that contains a comic strip written in English. It is attributed to Christian Evangelical Publisher, Chick Publications, and presents an unhappy Islamic family finding peace when they convert to Christianity. Though it contains low level depictions of violence, these are not to an extent or degree, or in a manner, that renders its availability likely to be injurious to the public good under s3(2) of the FVPCA. The booklet was also considered under s3(3)(e) of the FVPCA, and while it paints Islam as a barbaric religion, it does not directly state or imply that Muslims as a group are inherently inferior to Christians. The comic mainly deals with doctrine. Criticism of the Quran is not inherently degrading or harmful to Muslims. Although this criticism can be (and all too often is) used to further marginalise and isolate Muslims living in New Zealand, this is not its clear and unambiguous purpose. The criticism of Islam (as with criticism and scepticism of all religions) is a healthy part of not just a free and democratic society, but also religious scholarship and philosophical debate. This does not necessarily result in anti-Muslim beliefs, and while the deliberate distortion of Islam will no doubt be offensive for many, the publication must be classified unrestricted. This classification is consistent with the right to freedom of expression as provided by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.